

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

Alaskan Region

SUPPLEMENTAL

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

and

RECORD OF DECISION

for the

Construction of a Land-Based Airport

**City of Akutan, Alaska
Akutan Airport**

March 2011

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Construction of a Land-Based Airport
City of Akutan, Alaska
Akutan Airport

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The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Alaskan Region prepared this supplemental Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision (supplemental FONSI/ROD) per Order 5050.4B, paragraph 805. In preparing this supplemental FONSI/ROD, FAA used the applicable information Chapter 13 of Order 5050.4B as a template.

The supplemental FONSI/ROD includes:

- a description of the project proposed by the Airport Sponsor;
- environmental impacts associated with the action and alternative; and
- mitigation measures required to avoid or minimize environmental harm.

This supplemental FONSI/ROD provides FAA's final determinations and approvals for the federal actions needed to construct a land-based airport to serve the community of Akutan, Alaska. The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities' (DOT&PF) is the airport sponsor.

The federal actions identified in this supplemental FONSI/ROD are:

- FAA's unconditional approval of the Sponsor's proposed Airport Layout Plan (ALP).
- FAA's approval of federal funds from the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to partially finance some of the proposed project components discussed on page 3 of this document.

DOT&PF prepared the supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) supporting this supplemental FONSI/ROD. The SEA presents an evaluation of the environmental consequences due to constructing and operating the Akutan airport facility. The evaluation follows the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and FAA Order 5050.4B, dated April, 2006.

FAA is responsible for the accuracy of all information the SEA contains. FAA finds that the SEA meets the requirements of the applicable FAA Orders and CEQ and accepts it. The SEA is made a part of this supplemental FONSI/ROD.

This supplemental FONSI/ROD also discloses the federal, state, and local actions needed before each of the projects may be implemented and provides findings, certifications, and determinations concerning resources of special concern. The supplemental FONSI/ROD lists the conditions of approval that the Sponsor must meet. Finally, this supplemental FONSI/ROD identifies the FAA's Preferred Alternative..

For more information concerning the contents of this supplemental FONSI/ROD or the SEA, please contact:

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BACKGROUND

In December 2007, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved an Environmental Assessment (EA) and signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) for the construction of a land-based airport near Akutan, Alaska. The airport access road, hovercraft ramps, pads and maintenance/storage facility to be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), required a separate FONSI that was approved by the FHWA on December 15, 2008.

The Aleutians East Borough (AEB), in conjunction with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), the FAA and the City of Akutan, prepared a supplemental EA (dated June 2010) to address additional material site requirements identified after the December 2007 EA and FONSI-ROD was signed. These changes included the addition of additional material sites and a sand storage building. The supplemental FONSI-ROD was approved by the FAA on July 2, 2010, based on the SEA approved on July 1, 2010. This second SEA is being initiated for changes to the project that have come about since the award of the contract to the design/build contractor and the following proposed modifications:

- Realignment of the airport runway;
- Expansion of the existing seaplane ramp on Akutan;
- Temporary construction facilities including a barge landing and construction access road along Surf Bay, fuel storage facility, and a personnel camp; and
- Realignment of Stream 1.

This supplemental FONSI/ROD addresses the environmental impacts associated with the additional project components required for the project not previously addressed in the December 2007 EA and FONSI/ROD. In order to better meet the purpose and need for the Akutan Airport project, the above listed modifications to the previously approved EA and SEA are proposed.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project (which has not changed) is to provide a land-based airport for safe and reliable access to the City of Akutan, Alaska. The airport is needed before aircraft currently providing service to this location (i.e., the Grumman Goose, an amphibious aircraft) are no longer operational. The Grumman Goose is presently the only aircraft that is able to access Akutan.

REQUESTED FEDERAL ACTION

The federal action is:

- Funding proposed improvements using Airport Improvement Program grant funds.
- Airport Layout Plan Approval of the proposed changes.

The proposal has changed from the original FONSI-ROD and the July 2010 SEA, to include: Expansion of the existing seaplane ramp on Akutan; Temporary construction facilities including a barge landing and construction access road along Surf Bay, fuel storage facility, and a personnel camp; and Realignment of Stream 1. The original FONSI/ROD provided FAA approval of federal funds from the Airport Improvement Program to partially finance the proposed airport.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION UPDATE

The original approved December 2007 EA and the July 2010 SEA were based on the initial project plan with design developed to only 30 percent complete. After the Akutan Airport Project was awarded to the design/build contractor, Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. (Kiewit), the design of the airport, the marine link with Akutan, and all supporting facilities progressed. With this progression of design, the project team identified several changes to be made to the proposed project were identified, which triggered the need for a supplemental EA.

The original project description, as detailed in the supplemental EA, remains unchanged except for the following additional project changes:

- Runway Realignment;
- Existing Akutan Seaplane Ramp Expansion;
- Temporary Construction Facilities;
- Realignment of Stream 1.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposal has been coordinated with the appropriate agencies and the SEA includes a detailed description, analysis, and evaluation of impacts and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate these impacts. The following section summarizes additional impacts associated with the modifications to the preferred alternative described in the 2007 EA and 2010. The impacts of the proposal consist of the following:

WETLANDS AND WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

- Realignment of the airport runway: 4.84 acres impacted (reduction of 5.56 acres impacted compared to the 2007 EA and July 2010 SEA).
- Expansion of the existing seaplane ramp on Akutan: Increase of 0.23 acres of intertidal/sub-tidal waters impacted compared to the 2007 EA and July 2010 SEA.
- Temporary construction facilities including a barge landing and construction access road along Surf Bay, fuel storage facility, and a personnel camp: Additional 1.1 acres of temporary wetlands filled for the temporary personnel camp.
- Realignment of Stream 1: Increase of 0.2 acres of streambed impacted compared to the 2007 EA and July 2010 SEA

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY SUPPLY

- A decrease in short term energy requirements would occur with less material extraction. than proposed in the 2007 EA and July 2010 SEA.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND PROTECTED SPECIES

- Realignment of the airport runway: No significant adverse impacts.
- Expansion of the existing seaplane ramp on Akutan: Insignificant change in northern sea otter and Steller's eider take.
- Temporary construction facilities including a barge landing and construction access road along Surf Bay, fuel storage facility, and a personnel camp: No significant adverse impacts.
- Realignment of Stream 1: No significant adverse impacts.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

- Realignment of the airport runway: Less than 6.5 acres impacted, a reduction of 5.5 acres from the 2007 EA and July 2010 SEA.
- Expansion of the existing seaplane ramp on Akutan: 0.23 acres impacted.
- Temporary construction facilities including a barge landing and construction access road along Surf Bay, fuel storage facility, and a personnel camp: No impacts.
- Realignment of Stream 1: 0.2 acres impacted, fish access will involve 460 ft fish passage culvert and 330 ft of riprap along Stream 1 to realign the stream.

REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The December 2007 EA considered three alternatives: an airport located on Akun Island (the Proposed Action); an airport located at Fish Banks; and the No Action Alternative. A complete description of the reasonable alternatives can be found in Section 5 of the December 2007 EA. FAA concluded in the FONSI/ROD that the Akun Island alternative was both the environmentally preferred alternative and the preferred alternative. The No Action Alternative would not address, correct or resolve the deficiencies and problems that have been identified with the current Akutan air service. The modifications addressed by the 2010 SEA and 2011 SEA do not change these findings.

AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES

In addition to the environmental commitments and mitigation included in the 2007 EA and the 2010 SEA, the following additional mitigation and commitments relate specifically to the proposed modifications outlined in the 2011 SEA:

WETLANDS AND WATERS OF THE U.S. IMPACTS

Unavoidable impacts to emergent wetlands were compensated at a rate of \$3,000/acre. For the Proposed Action, a total of \$43,960 was paid during the first quarter of 2010 into the Alaska Wetlands Conservation Fund to mitigate for the anticipated 12.11 acres of wetland impacts. This payment satisfied the project sponsors' obligations under the Clean Water Act based on anticipated wetland disturbance by the project as defined in the 2007 EA. Based on consultation with the USACE, the proposed modifications reduce the wetlands impacts by 4.84 acres; therefore, no additional mitigation is required to offset the 0.23 acre of intertidal/sub-tidal fill for the seaplane ramp expansion, 0.2 acre of streambank realignment, or the additional 1.1 acres of temporary fill for the construction camp.

CONSTRUCTION-RELATED IMPACTS

BMPs such as extensive hose inspection and secondary containment for transfer points would be used to prevent fuel spills. Both the fueling barge and the fuel storage facility would contain extensive spill response kits. The location of the temporary fuel storage facility at the hovercraft landing site to facilitate marine fuel transfers meets the environmental requirements of the 2007 EA by allowing for at least 100 feet between the facility and any bodies of water. The proposed location of this facility will meet all the requirements defined in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan and Hazardous Materials Control Plan as regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the DEC regulations and permitting requirements.

Before and after photos of the temporary landing site will be submitted to the USFWS prior to and directly following construction.

All temporarily used land will be restored upon completion of the project in fall 2012.

WATER QUALITY IMPACTS

The Water Quality Monitoring Plan and Retention Basins (2011 SEA Appendix D) will be incorporated into the project to treat storm water runoff and minimize water quality impacts to adjacent water resources.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT IMPACTS

Aircraft deicing will occur within the designated deicing area of the apron. Any drainage would run into a series of detention ponds that would remain on-site and not enter Stream 1. Vegetation of the drainage swale and addition of a retention feature were incorporated to minimize potential water quality impacts associated with moving the location of the runway and aircraft deicing and septic system closer to Stream 1, and temporary fueling, and erosion.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND PROTECTED SPECIES IMPACTS

DOT&PF shall comply with all terms and conditions in the 2007 Biological Opinion, July 2010 Biological Opinion, and March 2011 Biological Opinion addendum authorizing incidental take of the Northern Sea Otter under the Endangered Species Act. Proposal project components that could affect the Northern Sea Otter as addressed in the March 2011 Biological Opinion addendum will commence upon receipt of the document.

DOT&PF shall comply with all terms and conditions in the 2007 Biological Opinion, July 2010 Biological Opinion, and March 2011 Biological Opinion addendum authorizing incidental harassment of the Steller's eider. Proposal project components that could affect the Stellar's eider as addressed in the March 2011 Biological Opinion addendum will commence upon receipt of the document.

DOT&PF shall comply with all terms and conditions in the active 2011 Incidental Harassment Authorization for the northern sea otter under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Additional activities to avoid or minimize harm will be stipulated in state and federal permit authorizations. All of these design features and mitigation elements are incorporated by reference into the selected alternatives and this Supplemental FONSI / ROD.

A survey for Bald and Golden Eagle nests will be conducted by project personnel prior to construction activities to ensure no nests are within 0.5 mile of proposed construction activities. This survey will include the new project footprint, including the realigned runway and temporary construction facilities. If eagle nests are found, measures to avoid and minimize impacts would be implemented based on consultation with USFWS.

HISTORICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES IMPACTS

An archeological monitor will remain on-site during construction. The intact area of the Surf Bay archeological site will be fenced prior to construction in conformance with the SHPO mitigation.

REQUIRED PERMITS/CLEARANCES

All previously identified permits and clearances remain in effect with necessary permit modifications as a result of the additional proposed project components described further below.

Construction contractor acquired permits and clearances will need to include the additional proposed project components. Compliance with all permit authorizations including but not limited to USACE 404 and Section 10 permit and Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit is hereby incorporated into FAA's decision.

SUMMARY OF NECESSARY FEDERAL AND STATE APPROVALS

All necessary permit modifications and extension requests were submitted to the permitting agencies during the development of the 2011 SEA (2011 SEA Appendix E). The permit review process is currently underway, and permits are anticipated to be in-hand by beginning of construction of each component.

FEDERAL APPROVALS

1. Sections 401,402, and 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. §§ 1341,1342, 1344)

A USACE Section 404/10 Permit for the fill in wetlands and Waters of the U.S was obtained on October 20, 2008; this will expire on September 30, 2013. A permit modification and extension request was submitted to USACE on December 23, 2010.

A DEC Section 401 Water Quality Certification was issued on October 6, 2008; this will expire on October 6, 2013. Modification of the Section 401 Water Quality Certification was initiated by the permit modification request to the USACE for the 404/10 permit.

2. Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) (16 U.S.C. §§ 1361-1421)

An Incidental Harassment Authorization for the Northern Sea Otter was issued by the USFWS on November 15, 2008, with the authorization to take sea otters beginning on May 1, 2009, and extending to April 30, 2010. An application for another year of authorization was submitted to the USFWS on January 22, 2010, and issued on July 12, 2010. A permit modification and extension request was submitted to the USFWS on February 9, 2011.

STATE-RELATED APPROVALS

1. Alaska Water Use Act (AS 46.15)

A DNR Temporary Water Use Permit was received on May 15, 2008, and expired on October 31, 2010. A Permit modification and renewal/extension was submitted to the DNR on December 28, 2010.

2. Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit (AS § 16.05.841-871)

A Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit was issued by the ADF&G on September 24, 2008, and will expire on December 31, 2010. A permit modification and extension request was submitted to ADF&G on December 23, 2010.

3. Leasing and Permitting of State-owned Lands (11 AAC §§ 58,62.690-730,96)

A permit application for the Land Use/Tidelands Permit from DNR for barge landing and beach access was submitted to DNR on December 22, 2010.

4. Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) Program

The Proposed Action will be developed in accordance with the DEC APDES Construction General Permit and will implement design measures to protect water quality. During design and construction, water quality impacts will be mitigated by the application of standard BMPs to control erosion and sedimentation.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The DOT&PF sent a supplemental scoping letter to resource agencies and interested parties by email on November 10, 2010, and by regular mail on November 11 and 12, 2010. The agency scoping comment period concluded on November 24, 2010. Comments were received from the following agencies:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
- NOAA
- USFWS
- ADF&G
- USACE

A formal scoping meeting to discuss the proposed modifications to the project was held on November 16, 2010, at DOT&PF's office and eight agency representatives attended the meeting. A summary of the comments received and DOT&PF's responses are included in the 2011 SEA Appendix A along with comment letters and e-mails.

A meeting was held with the SHPO on November 23, 2010, to discuss potential impacts associated with the proposed modifications to the project. Several additional follow-up discussions occurred between the SHPO, the DOT&PF, and the FAA. Documentation of the additional Section 106 consultation between the FAA and the SHPO is included in the 2011 SEA Appendix B.

Several follow-up meetings were held with the USFWS to discuss the proposed modifications to the project and requirements for an amended Biological Assessment and Section 7 consultation. Formal comments submitted by the USFWS on November 26, 2010, regarding the proposed modifications are summarized below and are included in the 2011 SEA Appendix A. Documentation of the additional Section 7 consultation, amended Biological Assessment, and amended Biological Opinion is included in the 2011 SEA Appendix D.

Several informal follow-up meetings were held with ADF&G to discuss the proposed modifications to the project and specific impacts to streams and fish habitat.

SUMMARY OF REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATIONS

The environmental determinations described in the 2007 FONSI/ROD for this project will remain. The project modifications as described in the SEA would conform to these determinations.

DECISIONS AND ORDERS

The decisions, orders, and determinations as described and approved in the 2007 FONSI/ROD, remain valid for this supplemental FONSI/ROD.

FEDERAL FINDING AND APPROVAL

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements and that it will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA. The FAA has determined that the supplemental EA addresses all issues adequately to demonstrate that no thresholds for significant impacts have been exceeded and an environmental impact statement is not required. Compliance with the requirements of all applicable environmental laws, Executive Orders and other related requirements has been met. Therefore, the FAA is issuing a supplemental Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision based on its conclusion that the proposed project change will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

APPROVED AND ORDERED


Byron K. Huffman

3/7/11
Date

Airports Division Manager, FAA Alaskan Region

RIGHT OF APPEAL

This FONSI/ROD presents the FAA's final decision and approvals for the actions identified, including those taken under the provisions of 49 U.S.C. Subtitle VII, Parts A and B. This decision constitutes a final order of the FAA Administrator subject to review by the Court of Appeals of the United States in accordance with the provisions of 40 U.S.C. §461 10. Any party seeking to stay the implementation of the ROD must file an application with the FAA prior to seeking judicial relief, as provided in Rule 18(a), Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure.

